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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Memorandum of Conversation

Approved in U 7/24/67

DATE: June 28, 1967

SUBJECT: Attack on U.S.S. "Liberty"

PARTICIPANTS: H. E. Avraham Harman, Ambassador of Israel
Mr. Ephraim Evron, Minister, Embassy of Israel

Acting Secretary Katzenbach
U - Donald R. Morris
NEA/IAI - James K. Matter

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The Acting Secretary handed Ambassador Harman a summary of the proceedings of the U.S. Navy court of inquiry into the attack on the U.S.S. "Liberty." He said this was the proposed Department of Defense press release in response to considerable pressure from the press. The Acting Secretary said he had read it and considered it a fair and judicious summary of what we knew about the attack itself. Certain details, not on the attack itself but concerning its effects on personnel, which were not germane and which would hardly be helpful, have been omitted from the summary. However, he had been assured by DOD that no material facts bearing on the attack had been withheld.

He also said that the document does not attempt to assign culpability for the attack; it points out that the U.S. flag was hard to see, and that clouds of smoke were pouring up from the ship as a result of the air attack, obscuring visibility.

Mr. Harman asked whether any further contacts with the USG on this matter should be with Mr. Katzenbach, to which he replied, Yes, that would be appropriate. Mr. Katzenbach said in response to a further question that the Department of Defense would release the document to the press late June 28 or early June 29. Ambassador Harman responded that the GOI would be reissuing its statement about a judicial inquiry being underway.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CSC/MR
REVIEWED BY John Kelly DATE 1/24/83
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Ambassador Harman said he wanted the Acting Secretary to know that he sent letters of condolence to the families of those killed in the attack. This had been a difficult decision for him, but he had finally decided to do it.

In response to the question whether we planned to send it to Tel Aviv, Mr. Katzenbach replied that we would probably cable a summary and pouch the full text.

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JOSEPH M. McDADE
10th District, Pennsylvania
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

June 13, 1967

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

Last Thursday the USS Liberty was attacked by aircraft and torpedo boats of the nation of Israel. I am sure you will agree that this was one of the most shocking incidents our nation has ever witnessed.

Two of the men who were killed and two who were wounded were from my own Congressional District. Even if none of these men had been from my District, I would still be immensely concerned and distressed over this incident.

I do not wish to burden you unnecessarily but there are some questions which must be raised concerning this incident and I would deeply appreciate knowing the answers.

1. Have we received a complete report from the Government of Israel on how this attack took place? If so, could you make this report available to me?

2. Contradictory statements have been made concerning whether the ship was flying an American Flag at the time of the attack. Would it be possible to clarify this point precisely?

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SUBJECT: Attack on U.S.S. "LIBERTY". PTPS:U.S./Acting Sec Katzenbach ISRAEL:Amb Harman | DIST.: PP, PFI, AVTV

TO	DATE	TO	DATE	TO	DATE	TO	DATE	REVIEWED BY	DATE
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FINAL ACTION:
/s/
APPVD: I. H. 7/24/67
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

July 10, 1967

P - Mr. Morris

Memorandum of Conversation between the Under Secretary and Avraham Harman, Israeli Ambassador, June 28, 1967

For approval prior to distribution.

OK

The Under Secretary's remarks are underlined in red.

This memorandum was drafted by J. K. Matter of NEA/IAI.

Benjamin H. Read
Executive Secretary

Memorandum of Conversation

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